



The Binnacle

Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society
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Vancouver Island Radio Control Boaters



Photo: Bill Sturrock

Westshore 2007
BIG SUCCESS!
Says VMSS President Dave



From the Bridge

Well there it is boys and girls , the first event is in the bag and put to sleep. Our show at Westshore was a success from most

points of view.

First and second place in the public choice went to Mike Creasy for his models of the Bismark and the Hood. First place for modelers choice went to Jack Plummer for his model of Imperial Quebec, second place went to Doug Allen for his ever sweet model of Miss Celtic. We did not do a steering course, what I have in mind everyone build a model of Thomas the tugboat out of cardboard, that way we will have a good chance at a steering course with our own boat ,and all of the boats will be very close to identical.

We will race in the spring at Harrison Yacht Pond (we are trying to get more events at the pond) .Another suggestion is a predicted time race where the winner gets a turkey or a meal for two at some restaurant.

The first official sailboat race is coming up on Feb 11 . I will have had a warm up at Beaver Lake on Feb 4 ,so I can hope all will go well.

A short story to tell you about Marion.I was having a hard time getting to sleep Friday night so I went down stairs and cut some templates for a new tug I am thinking of building. After breakfast Marion spotted the shapes and had me cold turkey. She is an old pro at spotting a new project and she got her digs in first.

"The kitchen floor is looking about ten shades past shabby Dave ,I think we need something done with it" needless to say, before the tug progresses there will be a new floor laid in the kitchen. I would like to write more but there is a floor calling me. I'll see you at the meeting. Dave

ON THE HORIZON

INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 8th March Meeting: SWAP'n Shop
- March 15-18 The Mid Vancouver Island Marine Modelers show at the Country Club Mall, Nanaimo.
- Mar 20-22 Maritime Museum Spring Break
- April 12th April Meeting: Social



MEETINGS: Second Thursday 7:15-9:15
313 Brunswick Place
Next is Mar 8th



POWER: Sundays 10 – 12
Harrison Model Yacht Pond (HYP)
Dallas Road at Government.



SAILING: 1st and 3rd Sundays 1 – 3 PM
Beaver Lake
Next are Feb 18th and Mar 4th



LANGFORD LAKE NAVY
Wednesdays 9:30
Langford Lake, Leigh Rd at Trillium



Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society

General Meeting – 11 January 2007

Call to order: 7:15 pm

Present: 14 members, no guests (heavy snow on the ground)

1. West Shore show duty roster started. It was emphasized that we need to be operating boats in our pool.
2. We still have calendars for sale. \$10
3. The boat table for HMYP is being constructed by Bob Rainsford and Dave Denton
4. There was a discussion about the focus of the club. It was decided to create a subcommittee to executive to develop and implement measures which will raise our profile and attract new members
5. The church was given \$200 as thanks for allowing us to use their facilities.
6. Barry Fox outlined the sailing series for Spring 2007.

Adjournment 8:20

Get your 2007 VMSS Calendar now!

2007 Executive Committee

President: Dave Denton	478-1800
Vice-Pres: David Taylor	652-6480
Secretary: Ron Hillsden	479-5760
Treasurer: Tom Pound	595-6487
Show Coordinator: B. Andrews	479-2761
CRD Liaison: Ken Lockley	477-5830
Barry Fox	743-5729
Parks Liaison: Dave Denton	478-1800
Binnacle Editor: Bill Sturrock	479-0239
Quartermaster: Bob Rainsford	383-2256
Librarian: Rick Rainsford	382-0898
Sailing Director: Barry Fox	743-5729
Director at Large: Ken Scotten	472-6187
Director at Large: Ernest Reid	652-8579
Publicity: Dave Denton	478-1800



Public Choice
 1. KM Bismarck M Creasy
 2. HMS Hood M Creasy
 3. Princess Kathleen J Lenfesty

Modellers' Choice
 1. Imperial Quebec J Plummer
 2. Miss Celtic Doug Allen

Photos: Bill Andrews





Old Wood & Rusty Iron – by Mike Creasy

Do you remember the former Canadian National steamer **PRINCE GEORGE**, which lay for many years at the old Britannia Mines dock in Howe Sound? Well then, did you know about the connection between CN, the port of Prince Rupert and the **RMS TITANIC**?

Long before the CNR was created, BC's northern rail system was built and operated by the Grand Trunk Railway. The GTR began in 1852 with a line from Montreal to Toronto. It slowly expanded in Eastern Canada and the US, but faced growing competition from the CPR.

CP completed its transcontinental rail system with a railhead in Vancouver in 1886, and the British owners of the Grand Trunk decided they needed their own west coast terminus. They hired a hard driving American, Charles Melville Hays, and he quickly set out to take on the country and the competition.

In 1903, his engineers laid out the route. Through the Yellowhead Pass to Fort George, along the Nechako River and down the Skeena to the new town of Prince Rupert. 500 miles shorter than the rival CPR route, and with lower grades to boot.

The Grand Trunk Pacific started its marine operations in 1908, when paddlewheel riverboats were needed along the Skeena to support railway construction. By 1910, GTP was offering service to Vancouver and the Queen Charlottes with the 232 foot **PRINCE ALBERT** and the 185 foot **PRINCE JOHN**.



Title: The CNR's SS Prince George near Bella Coala.

The original **PRINCE RUPERT** and **PRINCE GEORGE** were built in 1909/1910, specifically intended to compete with the CPR's Princess ships. These identical passenger liners were 320 long, with two triple expansion steam engines

Thanks to Bill Birch and Binnacle readers for giving me the motivation to do some writing. Now that the genie is out of the bottle, I hope to keep contributing on a more or less regular basis – writing about maritime history.

Other people are far more qualified than me to write about model-making so instead, I'll try to bring out the stories behind the ships we model. Keeping this historical perspective alive by telling or re-telling these stories plays a very large part in ensuring that our models aren't seen simply as expensive toys.

I hope you agree. Mike Creasy

powered by coal burning boilers.

The new Prince ships went head to head with the CP's **PRINCESS CHARLOTTE** and **PRINCESS ADELAIDE** in the express passenger business, while the smaller Albert and John continued to service smaller communities and logging camps.

Charles Hays had great plans for the GTP fleet and for Prince Rupert. The services of Francis Rattenbury were retained to design a new grand hotel over the waterfront, to be twice the size of Victoria's Empress Hotel. GTP was already marketing coastal cruises to the icefields of Alaska (\$48 return from Seattle), with the option of a rail tour of the Rockies.

Unfortunately, Hays didn't live to see his dreams come true. He was in Europe in 1912, talking up his new transcontinental railway and seaport, and raising money for future projects. He was returning to Ottawa for the opening of his new hotel – Chateau Laurier – as a guest of Bruce Ismay on board the brand new **RMS TITANIC**. You already know how that story ends.

By 1919, Grand Trunk Railway was literally running out of steam. It was nationalized, and in 1923 became part of the new Canadian National Railway.

Marine operations on the west coast were continued under the new regime, but Hays' plans for a new hotel at Prince Rupert were shelved. CN's new masters preferred Vancouver, and design began on a new hotel near the Vancouver station.

In 1929, CN president Sir Henry Thornton ordered three new ships from Cammell Laird, designed to continue the competition with CPR. **PRINCE HENRY**, **PRINCE DAVID** and **PRINCE ROBERT** were named, not for old country royalty, but for the boss himself and two of his vice-presidents! As if to prove that megalomania is good sport for a senior public servant, Thornton went on to plant his own name on the new hotel.

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That may have been the last straw; Thornton was fired and Hotel Thornton was renamed the Hotel Vancouver – the name it still bears today.

The three Princes were not resounding successes. The economy of the 1930's meant empty seats and declining profits leading to long lay-ups for the new ships. In 1932, the **PRINCE HENRY** and **PRINCE DAVID** were sent to the east coast to try the cruise market there. In 1939, with WW 2 looming large, the trio were purchased by the Canadian government for conversion into Armed Merchant Cruisers while the old **PRINCE RUPERT** and **PRINCE GEORGE** soldiered on with west coast duties. The warships never returned to CN's fleet.

In 1945, the **PRINCE GEORGE** caught fire and was lost while at Ketchikan.

In 1946, Yarrows of Victoria was awarded a contract to build

a new 335 foot coastal liner.

The second **PRINCE GEORGE** entered service in 1948, and served reliably and without notable incident until April, 1975 when she caught fire while berthed in Vancouver, effectively ending CN's marine operations on the west coast. The damaged ship was sold, and while all kinds of schemes were hatched, the **PRINCE GEORGE** lay rotting at the Britannia dock.

How different things might have been without that one iceberg.....

Bibliography

Prince Ships of Northern BC, Norman Hacking, Heritage House, 1995
A Thousand Blunders, Frank Leonard, UBC Press, 1996
Royal BC Museum Archives



MONSTER GARAGE! Left: the quartermaster at morning coffee. Centre: Lawrie Neish, West rep CRYA, Dave Denton and Barry Fox. Right: Barry giving some helpful information. Photos by Ernie Reid.

The Sub Subject

This year's first column ended on the promise or threat that this month's would deal with the genesis of the "The Sub Subject."

At the then time of writing, I figured it would be as easy as talking about it. I was wrong. I had to look up dates where I could still find 'em, cast the reduced capacity memory back 102 months (8.5annos) and try to think of many things- -such as what happened and why- -and re-read some of the stuff to check up on what I'd put out for your tolerant readers' eyes. It wasn't as easy as talking about it. Not at all.

Meanwhile, as a dilettante writer, I subscribe to the saying that holds sway in the ranks of university faculties worldwide: "Publish or perish." And I do believe that the Binnacle, low-key as it may be, makes a mark for the V.M.S.S.- -especially because portions of it go on the Club's website, and (according

to Ron Hillsden) gets thousands of hits. Now back to the start of the start.

Early in 1998, the then program chairman asked me to make a presentation on model submarines to the Club's March meeting. I'd agreed with gratitude and enthusiasm. But another member had also been invited to talk about a model The Matthew he had under construction- -a quite historical vessel, I gather.

The Matthew builder was first in line, and he went on, on and on, to the point where attendants started to shift on their seats, with Tim Horton coffees on their minds. But the oral hemorrhage continued unabated.

Anyway, I still got some time to present (with a boat on hand) the main part of my intended address, but had to stop shy of the closing "Problems" section.

Out on the Saanich Scout Hall's porch, I mentioned my pre-

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dicament to Julie Hillsden - the then Binnacle editor.

Julie had already twigged on my problem of the "Problems" section hitting the cutting room floor, and mentioned her Problems ("Issues" in new speak) of getting material for the Binnacle. She suggested that I write up that for which there hadn't been time. Great idea.

Under the "Problems" sub-heading, I'd outlined these four bugbears in my speech's notes: (1) Leaks, (2) Trim, (3) Ballast Tank Size and, (4) Linkages.

Some days after our conversation, I set to work. Estimating about 1,000 words would do the job. Oh, yeah? The "Leaks" topic already took up a higher word count. So I asked Julie if, perhaps, she would mind if I did four consecutive pieces. "Mind!!!!?" she said. "I'd be delighted!"

Now I could say, "and the rest is history," but there's more to it than that.

While churning out those first four pieces, I was flattered to hear that my slangy, corny, pseudo gonzo style was not just tolerated, but even applauded by the less pedantic readership. A real break, 'cause in the past many of my technical submissions for publication were rejected, or blue pencilled beyond recognition. So the Binnacle became home and feels like it. Too bad for the editors that I'm not computer literate. They have to retype my typing. Sorry.

Now and again, I'm asked about this "Romanus Unicum" pen name. That a bit of V.M.S.S. history in itself.

For the first column (June 1998) I signed off thus:

"Romain

(The only one so far)"

For July it became

"Romain (namesakeless)"

But all along, Paul Jordan kept calling me "Romanus"- -the Latin for "Citizen of Rome." I liked that. But how, then, about "Unicum"?

My only claim to being unique (which all of us are) pertains to the V.M.S.S.'s membership list.

At V.M.S.S. it is a factual fact that my first name is the only one. But "The Only One" implies pretense- -which I've shunned and abhorred all my life. Then just around that time, Ron Hillsden ran a piece in the Binnacle that the Club seemed bent on attracting "Bills", "Jacks" and "Rons"- -with some Dons, Eds, Pauls et cetera tossed in for camouflage. So, I thought, 'Stay with Latin: go for "Romanus Unicum" and be done with it.'

Bottom line: I have and continue to enjoy churning out the column, and hope the fun will continue, together with passing on tads of seminal information. But finding 12 topics a year? Not so easy. Unfortunately, research does not come easy to me, and I've let last year's let down by Vice Admiral M.B. Maclean discourage me from the interview business.

While I'm not utterly desperate for topics, it's tougher than one might imagine. On that score, Ron Hillsden gets a tip of the halo. He gets me great balls out of the Internet, and I make touchdowns with 'em. Please, hard-copy readers and website visitors: supply me with straws and I'll make the bricks. With that, I hope to have answered some of the questions that some of you had.

Next month, I'll set out some general, personal thoughts on the merits and demerits of kit -, semi-kit or outright scratch building, and the step above all three options.

Romanus Unicum Victoria, January 10, 2007

GET YOUR VMSS 2007 CALENDAR NOW!

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE!

If you have
Comments
Or
Suggestions
Please
Contact
Your
Executive

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE!

Feb 11 All Island Racing Series Beaver Lake
Mar 11 All Island Racing Series Lake Cowichan
Mar 20-22 Maritime Museum * Spring Break
Apr Opening Regatta - Sail and Powell Cup (1)
Apr 8 All Island Racing Series Long Lake
May 6 Opening Regatta - Power * Battle of the Atlantic
May 13 All Island Racing Series Sunset Lake
May ? Maple Bay Marina Wood Boat Show
Jun 1-3 2007 I.O.M. Canadian Championship Regatta
Jun 1-30 Sidney Museum Display
June 15? Cowichan Bay- Display and Show
July 8? Strawberry Festival Show and Display
July Mid-Summer Sailing Regatta and Powell Cup (2)
Aug ? Power * Coast Cup Regatta?
Aug 6? BC Aviation Museum?
Sep 1-3 Saanich Fall Fair
Sept/Oct? VMSS club sail, picnic and Powell Cup (3)
Dec 13 Christmas Social

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE!

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Or
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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE!



Pam Lloyd

Staff writer

As Orca 55 was officially accepted into the navy three weeks ago, Alex James was in his basement workshop putting the finishing touches on his replica of the ship.

James' radio-controlled Orca 55 measures the size of a duffel bag and is made of styrene, a sheet plastic. The hull and bridge are nearly finished and painted navy matte grey. He's now working on brass railings the size of a pencil lead.

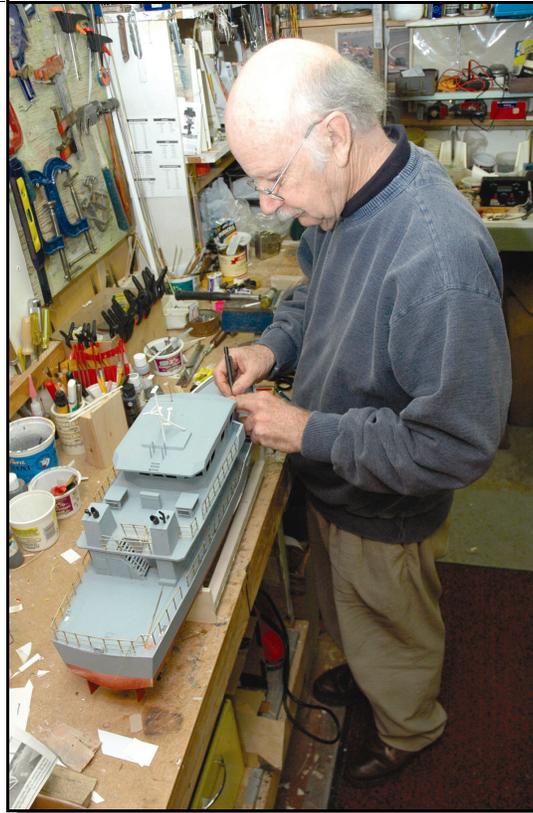
James heard about the ship at a meeting of the Victoria Model Shipbuilding Society a few months ago, of which he has been a member for six years. "Most of the time it's just nattering amongst ourselves, and playing with boats", he says.

At this particular meeting, fellow member John McHutchion mentioned a ship he was working on at Victoria Shipyards. James jumped at the opportunity to make a miniature Orca 55.

"I like making things nobody's ever done before," he says. "You go to the model yacht pond and often there's several models of the same type of boat."

James pieced together the ship from blueprints and photos supplied by McHutchion. He then went to his workshop, where files, chisels and screwdrivers line the wall, and bits of scrap plastic from past projects cover the workbench. He uses a 30-year-old lathe and a jigsaw for cutting out the pieces, then a file the size of a pen for the finishing work.

The 75-year-old retiree, originally from England, has plenty of experience making models. He's been doing the craft since age 10 when an uncle piqued his interest in boats by giving him a 1927 book on ship designs. The detailed plans in the book inspired him, he says. When he spotted a photograph in the newspaper of the German battleship Scharnhorst, he drafted a plan and made his



first model out of leftover wood he picked up from an undertaker.

James even found a career with models. While head of exhibits at the Royal B.C. Museum, it was his job to design and organize the construction of exhibits such as the stern of HMS Discovery, and the Grand Hotel.

"We built models of everything we were going to do at the museum. It's well known to people in the trade that it solves a lot of problems if you can see things in 3D," he says.

James does not measure the time he spends on his models, but for Orca he estimates around 130 hours of lab hours, with the same amount of hours needed to finish it. "The fiddly bits are what I'm doing now, which take longer."

"I was hoping to get it into the water before the actual

vessel," he says. Instead, he took his model for a test run on the pond off Dallas Road one week after Orca 55's official acceptance. He hopes to complete the miniature ship in three weeks.

"She was running a bit low in the water. Because of the weight of the inside parts it was down to the water line"

Other recent projects were a harbour tours ferry, a 19th century European fishing boat and a tugboat built during the Second World War.

James gifts his models to family or friends; otherwise they would clutter his home, he says. As for Orca, "I have no plans, other than to play with it," he says.

The full-sized Orca Class Patrol Craft Training vessel measures 33-metres long, with a displacement of 210 tonnes and a top speed of 20 knots. Its will be used to train sailors and cadets, replicating a ship similar to what they will eventually work in.

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